



S W I T C H B A C K

Cathy Laudenbach

## PLEASE BE CAREFUL

Photographs

You are cordially invited to the opening  
of this exhibition on Tuesday, 22 February  
2011, at 5pm.

Exhibition dates : 22 Feb to 17 March

Hours : Mon to Fri, 9am-5pm

or by appointment

Building 6S, Monash University,  
Gippsland Campus, Churchill, 3842

Phone : (03) 5122 6261

G A L L E R Y

*PLEASE BE CAREFUL*, 2010

C type print

20" x 24"



**MONASH** University  
Art & Design

Welcome to Switchback Gallery and Please be Careful. My name is Rodney Forbes.

Catherine Laudenbach's recent photographs investigate Australian places of trauma, including the Stuart Highway in the Northern Territory, where British tourist Peter Falconio was murdered and his girlfriend abducted, Cheviot Beach, where Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt disappeared, and the Belanglo State Forest where a serial killer dumped his backpacker murder victims. What Laudenbach asks is, "What role can the camera play in interrogating these 'badlands'?"

In her investigation of the Stuart Highway site, Catherine unearthed a history of settler-indigenous conflict which resulted in a massacre of the staff of a telegraph station and a later slaughter of aboriginal men, women and children. At the site of Prime Minister Holt's drowning, a tragic shipwreck had occurred. For Australians, the ghastly convict history of Port Arthur in Tasmania is now forever tied to the mass shootings that happened there in modern times.

Of course if trauma visibly marked a place, then the average large public hospital would look like a splatter movie set. Rather, places are marked in our psyches by how we feel about them, both individually and as a public. Sense of place is carried in a sort of 'cloud of knowing' that is informed by myth and notoriety. The reflex response to this work might be that Laudenbach is aestheticising trauma - that is until one sees the absolute ordinariness with which she represents these places. Much has been written about the banality of evil. We know that ordinary upstanding citizens can cheerfully participate in the perpetration of a genocide and that some of the most luminous moments of our lives happen at places like grimy bus stops or dreary sharehouse loungerooms.

Catherine Laudenbach invites us to look at images of these places of trauma and compare that to what we know or imagine about them, and then question how we see both the ordinary and the mythical. I for one, am grateful that there are artists who don't retreat from the hard topics. This is a long way from Matisse's ideal of art that is like a comfortable chair.

Catherine is a Master of Fine Arts candidate at Gippsland Centre for Art and Design in the Faculty of Art and Design at Monash University. She has been selected as a finalist in numerous National prize exhibitions including the Alice Prize, the Togart Contemporary Art Prize and the Bowness photography Prize. In 2000 she was the winner of the prestigious Josephine Ulrick National Portrait Prize.

The artist is present tonight – that's her over there. I'm sure she would enjoy discussing her work with you. Finally many thanks to Neale Stratford, Russell Snelton and Bernie Buykx for their work on the installation and administration of the exhibition and to you the audience for coming along and supporting live Visual Arts.

Thank you



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Art & Design

SWITCHBACK GALLERY

**22 February – 17 March 2011**

**Cathy Laudenbach**

**PLEASE BE CAREFUL**

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**Curated by Rodney Forbes**

1. *Looking for Peter Falconio. Barrow Creek. Self-portrait.* Photographic negative printed onto archival inkjet paper. 70 cm x 100 cm. Photograph on backing board.

2. *Barrow Creek Series.* Series of seven images 30cm x 40 cm. Photographic negative printed onto photographic paper. C-type prints. Framed.

3. *Belanglo State Forest. Please Be Careful.* Series of eight images 100cm x 90 cm. Photographic negatives printed onto archival inkjet bamboo paper. Pinned.

4. *Cheviot Beach.* Series of eight images 38 cm x 30 cm. Photographic negative printed onto archival inkjet paper. Framed.